

The Onyx Informer

Representing Black Culture at Northeastern University

Since 1972

May 28, 1999

Gridiron Star Off to the NFL



Andre Dixon | photo credit: Sports Information

Black on Black

Final part in a three part series

By Jamila Hill
Onyx Staff

Unity and diversity have become major themes in America in the past few years. The nation is becoming less bi-racial and more multi-racial.

President Clinton has introduced dialogues discussing race. And colleges and universities have sought better ways to bridge the racial divide.

While differences exist among the races, there are also differences within individual races.

Black Northeastern students feel that these differences strain relationships between black Americans and blacks from other countries.

"The relationship is rocky. There's a feeling of separation," said Duane Irby, sophomore, business management major.

"For example, if I'm Haitian and he's Haitian, it's mad love. But if I'm Haitian and you're not, then it's different," he said.

Irby continued that this is only "natural" because it "depends on who you feel comfortable around." That comfort level can cut across country ties.

Cultural differences, however, are not the only things that create tension among blacks.

According to Dr. Frederick Lee Hord, director of Black Studies at Knox College and president of the National Association of Black Cultural Centers, ig-

ers could get oriented with the veterans for the purpose of training camp in July. "It's so different from college in the atmosphere," Dixon said about his time at mini-camp. He described the relationships with the players and coaches as a primary reason it was different.

Dixon likes playing for the Packers and Ray Rhodes. The Packers have a great history and are once again among the NFL's elite teams. Dixon shares the view of many NFL followers that the Packers are a great organization, adding that "it's nice to be able to win a championship right away". Rhodes had coached the Philadelphia Eagles, whom Dixon is a die-hard fan of, the past four seasons before becoming the successor to Mike Holmgren. Dixon feels like he can relate to him and his defensive backs coach on many levels and on topics not necessarily related to football.

Dixon has had a great support system besides his friends who were present at his home games. His agent is former

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Frosh Returning?



Freshmen Ujima Scholars Class of 1998-99 standing for group shot
[photo credit: John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute]

By André Jean-Francois

There is a new sound on Huntington Avenue, and that sound is the face of the future. The class of 2003 has entered the college scene, and has been a major force on Northeastern's campus. Freshmen can be seen at cultural meetings (CSO, LASO, NBSA, etc.), at the gym, or even getting wild at parties. The new set of minority students share many things in common.

For many of the freshmen Northeastern was among their top choices because there are several programs that

target freshman minority students for admissions to NU. These programs include the Ujima Scholars Program and

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Young, Gifted, and Black

Bookstore on Wheels

By Tamika Cameron
Onyx Staff

Ever been riding through Dudley Square on your way to that 9:15 and saw a miniature bookstore on wheels? *Black Books* is stationed where buses 19, 23, and 28 stop. The cart is an extension of a larger black-owned and operated business called *Black Library*." Kevin Fisher and Lloyd Heart are partners in the company that's idea originated from a friend's Northeastern University dorm room.

The Black Library is a community based book seller in Roxbury specializing in African-American literature ranging from kids to adult fiction and non-fiction. The cart is located in the center of a large African-American commuter population. The excellent location provides for convenience and exposure to their target market.

"The thing we should strive for is having something in the community," Fisher said.

You may have seen Fisher at the

Annual Step Show giving the Northeastern community an opportunity to look at his selection. In addition, they also donate books to the African-American Institute and to after-school programs.

However, community support varies. Just like any other business, there are the customers who refuse to buy a book from anywhere else and those who prefer to go somewhere else based on prices.

"Price are competitive but every month we're having some sort of sale," Fisher said.

They are not in a rush to open a store, especially with the history of independent book sellers going out of business. In the future they hope to have another cart located at Roxbury Crossing as a way to continue servicing the community.

Their web site is www.blacklibrary.com that way you can still view the selection of literature and also make purchases on-line.

How Much Do You Know? - a Lesson in History

A. This African couple bought out their indentured servitude in 1624. By the early 1650s they owned a 250-acre plot of land in Northampton County, Virginia, with both black and white servants. Who were they?
B. In 1501, the governor of Hispanol was forbidden from importing Africans except for Iberian Christianized blacks. What was the name given to these black Africans?
C. This grant was given about as

DIXON, from page 1

Northeastern and Packer star lineman Sean Jones, whom he credits for a lot of things since the Packers signed him. "He keeps me mentally focused, tells me how to carry myself, keeps me from being star-struck", Dixon said. Dixon notes the importance of much of this because he feels like he has to work harder to prove himself since Northeastern is a Division I-AA school in football and is not at the level of competition as schools such as those in the Big Ten or Southeastern Conference.

Dixon also gives much credit to his defensive coaches at Northeastern, Bruce Tall (since departed from NU) and Chris Magendantz. "They taught me a lot, and taught the defensive unit to work together and trust each other", he said of his coaches.

In high school, Dixon was an All-City wide receiver and converted to defensive back during his true freshman season, which he redshirted. Looking back, his redshirt year wasn't very hard for him as it is for many who want to play right away. "I took it as an opportunity to develop, seeing the size of these guys", he said, adding that it also aided his transition to defensive back by giving him more time to do so.

Dixon was at NU for some lean years and then for the good years at the end. His true freshman season, NU struggled to a 2-9 record, and slowly stepped up to 4-7 the following season. In 1996, Dixon became a starter on the 6-5 Huskies, NU's first winning season since 1987. He was fourth on the team in tackles (61) and second in interceptions (3).

In 1997, Dixon was a key player at

early as 1517. It gave exclusive right to participation in the slave trade with the Spanish. What was the name of the grant?

D. In the 18th century, this black man was a successful caterer and oyster house owner in Rhode Island. Who was he?

E. In the 18th century in Maryland, this black man built the first striking clock wholly out of American made parts. It kept perfect time for 40 years

cornerback, being named second team All-Atlantic 10 in helping the Huskies post an 8-3 record and nearly make the Division I-AA playoffs. Looking back, he felt it was a great case of experienced players like Jim Murphy learning from the previous seasons' experience and bringing it all together. He also cited the importance of tailback and close friend David Edmundson to this team, noting that "without Dave we don't go 8-3 and almost 9-2, much like we don't without Jim Murphy".

This past season, the Huskies got off to a fast start, reaching the Top 25 at one point. But a late season slide saw the Huskies drop their final four games and finish 5-6. Asked about the season, Dixon said, "A lot has to do with our red zone offense. Teams know we struggle in the red zone. We play a wide-open style, and it gets tough when there's less room to operate." He also cited issues with the kicking game for the upcoming 1999 season, especially in light of threenzone difficulties. Dixon finished sixth on the team in tackles with 53 and was one of five to intercept two passes, including one he ran back 90 yards against Connecticut. He earned first team All-Atlantic 10 honors for his efforts.

The biology major is as yet undecided on his future after football. Very aware that football will not last forever and that his career may end at any time (especially after his college career ended early due to torn ligaments in his ankle), he plans to go to school in the offseason while playing. While he has a biology background, he does not rule out the business world, and plans to gain knowledge in the world of computers.



Kevin Fisher, co-owner of The Black Library, standing in front of his cart at Dudley Station. [photo credit: Deidre DeGraffenreid]

H. He was also among the people who surveyed the land that the nation's capital was to be built on. Who was he?

F. During the American Revolution, this British commander proclaimed that slaves who left their rebelling masters and joined the British would be set free.

G. He was a literate slave preacher in Virginia. He had a vision on how his people could gain their freedom. On August 22, 1831 his

bloody rebellion began. By October 31, he was apprehended and on November 11, he was hung. Who was he?

H. This runaway slave escaped to Philadelphia by being mailed in a box. Who was he?

I. In 1848, this married couple escaped from slavery. The wife disguised herself and as an invalid white male planter traveling from Maryland to Ohio. Her husband pretended to be her slave. Who were they?

Answers below

FROSH, from Page 1

the Latino Cultural Center. The Ujima program is a unique program, which helps minority students of African-American and Latino decent adjust to all aspects of college life. The John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute has been at NU for thirty-one years helping and supporting not only freshmen students but also upper-class students succeed in their college life.

Another on-campus site where help is offered to minority students is the Latino Cultural Center. The LCC is organized to help support the Latino students on campus. The Cultural Center offers students tutorial services, gives them an opportunity to learn about cultural events, and instruct them on how to complete their first year.

Several freshman students, many of whom refuse to have their names printed, had the same impressions of being part of the Ujima Program and the Latino Cultural Center.

"At first I regretted coming here, yet as the year developed and I saw how much support and help I received from the program it made me feel more comfortable about being here", said Heidi Torres, freshman Ujima Scholar, nursing major.

The consensus from most Ujima Scholars is that in the beginning of the year they were not sure that they would have liked the program. Yet as the year progressed they saw that the program was a stepping stone and a supporting hand in their college education. The program gives them a sense of belonging to a group. Dana Benton a freshman Ujima Scholar feels that the program

has something special.

"If I was not in the Ujima Program during my first year, I probably wouldn't have come to NU." The program gives you a sense of family, which is there to assist you in adjustment to college," she said.

Latino freshman students also felt the same sense of being part of a family. The reason for this is that the cultural center provides them with all the help they need. The center is not only designed for Latino students but is a place where all freshman students can come for academic help, addressing concerns, as well as a support system during their college years.

Jessica Sanchez, a freshman Bio major describes her experiences during her first year as one that is truly challenging. She feels that the reason for this is that there are many obstacles that face minority students today. "As a Latino student I feel that I have to work harder to succeed in school", says Sanchez.

As the year wraps, this freshman will look back on their first year as a stepping stone. For them, NU is the place to reach their goals. Several may not return, but NU will be a place in which they learned to handle many different obstacles. Many of the freshman students will be returning, a good sign for a school whose low retention rates has been a huge blemish on its record. These freshmen want to come back to NU, let's see if they will be able to.

Answers (a) Anthony and Mary Johnson
(b) Edmunds (c) The Amistad
(d) Emmett Till
(e) Benjamin Banneker (f) Lord
Bacon (g) Nat Turner (h) Henry Brown
(i) William and Ellen Craft

Expressions

Untitled

Maxine Crawford

Females for many generations spent most of their time being sorry for standing up for themselves...

But not me!!!!

As a woman of the 90's, soon to be the queen of the new century, I'm going to start standing up for myself...

Because I'm not sorry!!!

I'm not sorry because I roll my eyes every time a guys says, "What's up girl?!" or "Hey you, yellow chick!!"

You see, I demand respect and if a man can't approach me like a gentleman should, he doesn't deserve my time or consideration.

I'm not sorry because I won't allow myself to become a estupida pendeja that gets played by the same man all the time.

You see, I would rather keep my virginity than have some simple man control me by

my emotions.

I'm not sorry because I know that what I want and won't settle for 2nd best.

You see, I rather get my education, which is #1 to me, instead of sitting at home waiting for LOVE to knock at my door!

I'm not sorry because I won't allow myself to be sweet talked by every gold-tooth, perm having, job needin', man who still lives with his mother, yet old enough to be my father, who has 5 kids with 5 different women.

You see, I DON'T need a man to validate me! And if he is all the world can offer,

then I'd rather be alone!

I'm not sorry because I won't laugh or turn red when I get called a chicken head or a bitch.

You see, I won't stay quiet like a woman should or be told that speaking up is unattractive.

I'm not sorry because I won't let you keep me oppressed, distressed, or in a dress.

You see, I don't feel that a woman has to be in a dress to be feminine and I don't care that my definition of femininity doesn't match yours!

I'm not sorry because I won't wait to be rescued by a knight in shining armor.

You see, instead of hiding or crying, I would rather fight to save my own life. You see, I'm just not sorry anymore!

I won't allow you to refer to me as a 2nd class citizen!

I won't down-play my intelligence to satisfy your male ego!

I won't throw my life away so I could lay up in some man's arms!

And...

I DON'T CARE HOW SPRING FRESH YOUR CLOTHES ARE OR IF YOUR FOOD IS WARM!

The days of women apologizing for being themselves are done!
Get over it!!!

Jason's Song

Jamila Hill

Two Haiku's For the Siete's I
Knew (and Know, the ledge)

Maurice Archer

Real

What's really real is,
when your words are limited
but actions tell all.

The Magic Number

If they only knew
Hip-Hop takes seven spaces
all 7's I'm repin'.

Talking feet
Ciphering
Sounds
Touch
Toe, heel
Hittin' hard
Tryin'
Reachin'
For rhythms
Beats
Conversin'
Speakin'
Words
Of the mind
Of the soul
In the feet

This Batter

Joe Banda

Initially, curiosity in my mind of the vision
Of true beauty possessed by this here entity
Had to roll my tints down so I could observe
This spectaole of intellect and thighs got me
I'm licking my lips, hungry as hell
I look at those eyes; they look at me in brown
I frown, but all she does is smile
My clouds clear up, jade-stalk is flying now
She speaks with confidence in her tone
I can condone her nice white teeth I think
Without deceit her voice resonates in my mind
Spree all up in her, one can perceive it
Besieged are those that she's not feelin' like that
Off the bat, mesmerized to the 3rd power
In circadian, she's in me every half-hour
Strategically seated so I can view movements
Components are there, proportions straight
Her demeanor is the bait, it's gonna get you
In slow motion I see her swing from side to side
I could watch them pants move all night
But, that's not the point, I want every bite
Head on proper, the way she carries herself
I hear myself, what, trying to be a super-thug
Drunk from this style, like a drug from this lust
Not yet, don't make me bust, a couple more lines I got
I'm high off this pine, time to make her feel it
This picture is my optimum platinum card
A hard swipe for that purchase of trust
Throw your others out, the gust blows you this way
In the dark this bright resonance involuntarily says
Come to me player, it's your turn to bat

Redefining of a Black Woman

Deidre DeGraffenreid & Kathy L.

Ain't I A Woman?
Didn't my loins give birth
To the Goddess Isis?
Wasn't I always I always the one
To save you in a crisis?
Nurturing your children as
I neglected my own.
Was I to be considered
Lower than dirt because of my skintone?
Why was I always portrayed
As unattractive or thickset?
With my hair tied back
With a scarf or fishnet?

Ain't I A Woman?
For many year a lot of
People, have know me as
The Mammy, Aunt Jemima
On the cover of pancake boxes and
As kitchen decorates.

Ain't I A Woman?
During the early 1900's
I have been seen as a
Dark individual, who always
Had a bright smile on
My face for days?

Ain't I A Woman?
Who has lost many important people in my
Life, who have either been sold or killed.
Can you or any of you
Tell me that I, that I, that I am not a
Woman!!!!!!

Expressions

Lost and Found

Khalid Hill

Thoughts of Neglect
Plague the mind,
The heart of a soul
"forgotten" in time.
A plethora begets wonder
Questions of "Why?"
Receiving no answers
Confusion one finds.

Useless interrogations
Yea of little faith
The answer is right here
In front of your face
Yet rather than seek
And give up thy feet
Thou walketh in defeat
Eternal in sleep.

Mine eyes have seen darkness
A vulgar world - forced to weep
Stories of cruelty
Struggles of the meek
Uncomprehendable
Blood from white sheets
A marathon of running
But death often cheats

Recline thine eyes
Offer unto me
Pain and destruction

One needeth not see
One act of faith
A lifetime of ease
Shall be given to thee
If - I AM - thou must meet

The aloud I exclaim
Your will I beseech
And boldly confess
"Christ died for me!"
I once was lost, but not I'm
found
Was blind but now I see.

—1998

The Description

K. Kerbanalli

Describe her.
Black.
No look closer
Dark skin, short nappy fro'
Is that all you really see?
I guess. How would you describe
her?

She has high cheekbones,
Thick arched eyebrows
Small, but defined nose
Thick full lips always in a smile
A complexion which some men,
unlike you, would cherish as the cup
of coffee on a winter morning.

Coffee strong, not weak slip
Only enhanced by a slip of sugar.
No, you only see what you think is
the obvious.
Black.
Dark skin,
Short nappy fro,
African nose and lips.
Is that all you really see?
Can't you see that this black is full
of beauty?

Words Possess Power

Josef Sorett

Our words possess
Power to bless,
Or curse
And what's worse,
Kill dreams.
For it seems that the language
That you and I choose to use
Can determine if another brother or
sister
Might win or lose.

For it is words that articulate knowl-
edge
Regardless of which college
You or I did or did not attend
To get the point across
And to declare who's boss
To spread truth
And set free.

But you see
Lies are also found within
To the chagrin of us all
For each of us has indeed taken the
fall
One time or another
Because some brother made a false
call
Which we chose to heed
And proceed without caution
Yielding undeserved trust
Feeling obligated by the words
I must tell you that words do have
power

I bear witness that they do break
bones
Playing the dozens
And dropping Jones
Talking about her cousin's phone
never rings
The thing I'm saying
As I move towards an end
Is that words can defend
Or fend off a cough
Or sneeze "God bless."

They're the ground on which we stand
The forum in which our existence
lands
Whether a demand
A command

Or simply an and which connects two
phrases.

Words continue to leave me as-
tounded
And sometimes even in dazes
I tell you
Words do have power
The ability to transcend
Seconds
Minutes
And hours
Eternity
In the span of one word
That's what you heard
Word

And in the beginning was the Word
And God said let there be
And Jesus spoke
And the storm was stilled.

Black Brother with a

Future

K. Kerbanalli

I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you my young, black
brother with a future.
I'm feelin' your joy
When you enter the doors of the
university
I'm feelin' your pride:
"Yeah I defied the odds, I'm here."
I'm feelin' you when you make it all
the way to graduation,

Grinning from ear to ear with the
diploma in your hand.
Laughing and reminiscing
About the good and the wrong,
The chicks and the fellas,
The parties and the books.

I'm feelin' you my young, black
brother with a future.
Affirmative Action hangs over your
head like a noose.
Some sneer and hate your very
existence
You get in the schools they apply and
the jobs they desire,
Because of the very element I lust
after.

I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you my young, black
brother with a future.
I'm feelin' your thick, nappy fro'
Which you wear proudly,
Tallinn' about "power to the people"
and "right on brother man."
I'm feelin' your chest swellin' up with
pride
At the progress made in the liberation
of folk.
I'm feelin' you brother Malcom, Evers
and King.
I'm feelin' your dejectedness
In having to pick which of us
Could get some education
While the rest of us work in the
factories
Supportin' families.
I'm feelin'
I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you young, black brother
with a future.
I'm feelin' your women's pain
In watchin' you being shipped to fight
their war, off in Nam
Where some of you sow your oats and
have slit eye children.
I'm feelin' you
When you realize that ole' Uncle Sam
has left you in the cold.

I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' you
I'm feelin' your slick, greasy conk
I'm feelin' you fine brother in the zoot
suit.
I'm feelin' you Brother Langston
Hughes and Cab Calloway.
I'm feelin' the blues and the creative
souls in the Harlem Renaissance.
Your determination for self expres-
sion in music, poetry and dance
Brother Ellington and Basie, gave us
inspiration.

I'm feelin' you young, black brother
with a future.

Untitled

Melisa Rivera

Destination: Nowhere
What a wonderful day,
don't you agree?
look at the sun shining through your
window,
come on sleepy head...
with weather so nice we shouldn't
waste any time
lets go out and play,
you know, play the same game that we
always play
walking down the street headed no
where, any where, somewhere
making plans to go all over the world
talking about the places we'll go and
all the things that we'll see
all of the plans we invent - just you
and me
but then we reach our final destination,
whatever that may be
and we come to an awkward halt
knowing that we are now stopped by
time
we must go back to our lives now
all those plans now
erased...memories lost in time
just like the last time; just like every
time
just like the next time
play time is up now
have we run out of time again or this
time has time caught up with us?
back to reality, each of us now on our
own time, two very different times
until the next time...hmmm...
the next time the things that keeps us
coming together is that silent
promise of next time, but never
knowing when next
time will be
some time
some other time
another time to play
and travel to distant places in our
minds that we say we will go to the
next time
so when is next time?
and when we get to next time why do
we waste it taking about the next
time?
are we scared that we'll run out of
time?
no,
we are sacred of nothing,
we defy time, and proceed to work on
our own time
stopping it when we are with each
other
time travelers is what we are
together it is our time
scared of nothing...except maybe of
reality
but regardless we continue to stop
time, defy time, totally ignore and
refuse to recognize time
because once we acknowledge this
social constraint that we know as
time
then we will be forced to realize that
its no longer
our time
no longer will we be the stoppers of
time but now the ones who are
stopped by time
but time will continue and until the
end of time
there will always be a next
TIME

The Onyx Informer

Since 1972

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Editorial

Retention

Retention has always been a thorn in Northeastern's side. The school has no problem recruiting minorities but seems unable or unwilling to fix the problems that cause them to leave.

Have you ever left the office of the bursar, financial aid or registrars feeling like you've just been bent over and proverbially....

This is Northeastern's problem with retention. NU does not offer minority students the financial help that is most always the cause of its retention problems. I'm sure we all could fill volumes on bursar blocks, cries to financial aid counselors or transferring in senior year (if you're lucky enough to make it that far).

If academia was the cause for poor retention among all students, I would gladly side with the university in saying that it isn't their fault. BUT, too many of us have made the Dean's list time after time and still see no scholarship forthcoming. If good grades can't get you any money and if you have already prostituted all your future earnings to borrow exorbitant loan amounts, what else can you do?

Everyone can remember the number of people that looked like them that came in with their freshman class. How many of those people are still here? Can you even count them on one hand? This is a huge sign and should be a loud wake-up call to Northeastern. The minority students that are here, want to be here. Give us the chance to.

Disillusionment among minorities at Northeastern is rampant. NU to many students, is the unexpected STD you never thought you would catch and can't get rid of. You are caught in the violent cycle of coming to school, owing the school money, being blocked by the bursar, can't pay the bill, can't transfer until you pay the bill, stay on permanent coop and not making enough money to pay your bill and live, and ultimately becoming a college drop-out.

This cycle is unnecessary. For a school that prides itself on diversity, this is a crying shame. Diversity cannot be achieved without at least the presence of minorities. A stable minority population cannot be sustained without retention. Retention cannot be achieved without adequate financial aid. This simple formula needs to reach Northeastern's ears.

Apathy is rampant among students on campus although we cannot afford it. Students need to make their problems and voices heard. We must join together and demand more aid, demand the right to be here!

If our presence is necessary to Color the landscape, pay us for the privilege. A black face in a college brochure or guidebook speaks volumes. If a picture is worth a thousand words, we are due our just rewards. We did absorb the capitalistic principles this university lives by.

Much love,
The Editors

Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow

This is our final issue for the year. We would like to thank our staff for the hard work they've put in and the sacrifices they've made. It took a lot to get *The Onyx* back on campus, but we hope that we will continue to serve you for a long time. We look forward publishing more often next year, with an enhanced staff and special features.

We encourage you to join *The Onyx* and make your voice heard. We are the only ones who can tell our stories. Our presence *must* be felt on this campus. Our next issue will be our freshmen issue, making its debut in September 1999. Thank you for coming out and supporting us, and reading *The Onyx* Informer. Have a great summer!!

Make Your Voice Heard

Send Letters to The Editors

The Onyx Informer
360 Huntington Ave
430 Curry Student Center
Boston, Ma 02115
Call 373-2250

Send Letters and Opinion Pieces

Stop, Look, and Help

FACT: The Onyx Informer is the student newspaper representing the Black culture at Northeastern University

FACT: The Onyx needs active membership to continue as an entity at Northeastern

FACT: No one can tell our story better than we can

Whether your major is journalism, graphic design, business, or any other major offered at Northeastern, The Onyx Informer is calling you! We need people to help with editorial, design, business affairs, and many other things. If you can help, please contact The Onyx Informer. Remember, The Onyx Informer is your newspaper, your voice, so let it be heard loud and clear.

CONTACT: Jamila Hill or Kerrita McClaughlyn and leave us your name, number, email address, and area of interest.

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Introducing: The Onyx Informer Online

The staff of the Onyx Informer is pleased to announce the launch of our new Internet web site. The web address is www.dac.neu.edu/onyx.

The site will officially open the last week of May 1999.

Visitors to the web site will discover a sampling of articles from the most recent issues (including this one). An archive of past issues will also be established.

Eventually, those readers who wish to subscribe will be able to do so using the online subscription form.

The web site contains detailed information about the publication, including its editorial focus, the paper's circulation, an editorial calendar of special features and events, advertising rates, and key personnel.

Visitors to the site will be able to send comments and questions to the editors and staff.

In the future, links to other student organizations will be established, as well as to other media groups and similar minority-owned publications.

Please check out the following web sites:

- ⟨ NBSA - www.dac.neu.edu/nbsa
- ⟨ CSO - www.dac.neu.edu/cso
- ⟨ BESS - www.coe.neu.edu/Groups/BESS
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It Was Written

Jubilee

Kerrita McClaughlyn

The crowd gathered in the street,
little faces eating candy and laughing -
glad to be up with grown folks,
a rare summer treat!
The women huddle in masses,
gossiping and sharing secrets -
"Honey! grab me a beer!"
a voice bellows from the crowd of
potbellied men
standing proudly.
I look on in envy....I want to join the
Jubilee.
I gradually make my way over to join
the festivities.
I had expected to see the Fair -
pony rides, clowns and candy.
Instead,
Old nigga Jim,
that no good nigga according to
Sheriff Lee,
was swinging,
swinging, swinging,
from the old country tree.
THIS! was the cause for Jubilee.
It's that old nigga Jim
and he's swinging!
It's the gun upside the head of my
lover, father, brother!
It's the red stains on America's
dieways
It's-the-red-stains-on-America's
DIEWAYS!!
It's that nigga Jim swinging,
The Jubilee is just beginning!



Why Do They Condemn It

Ebony LaFrazier

Just the idea of being motivated to gleeful, rhythmic dance
by the beats.

Then words and deep and meaningful lyrics penetrate my
soul as it speaks my mind,
my deepest thoughts and most frequent anger.
Speaks the pain of my people with logic, reason and undeni-
able truth.

Truly the embodiment of art, the most meaningful poetry that
I know.

Why I love this music?

Why is it better the louder I play it?
The pounding and the noise to beat out or block out the
overwhelming noise in my head.
The relief, the rush as it pours out the speakers and it seeps
and speaks the injustice,
The outrage and the bitterness from my mind and my soul.

Finally the reciprocity, the quality, the wisdom and the
understanding.

For me it's that confirmation that I always need and look for.
There is someone else who sees with clear sight.
Who acknowledges the evils without stutter and hesitation?

It is this music that frees my people, mentally, physically,
spiritually, and financially.
That which can provide a way out.

Why condemn what can make ghetto prisoners rise?
Why quiet truth when spoken, and why not learn from life
experience shared?

If you don't want to hear it, do you think we want to live it?
How come we are ignored when we wanna talk to the mayor,
or to the governor?

Why do they see the beauty and the struggle in a rose that
grows and perseveres and flourishes amongst rubbish, rocks
and dirt; yet no beauty or positivity can be found in our stars
that rise to success out of utter despair?

To recognize the beauty I see and speak of would only be to
our benefit, which in turn would be to the detriment of their
plans for our demise.

Why do they condemn it?

Why do they want to kill it and put an end to its goodness,
like Malcolm, Martin, Huey, Bobby, Stokely and the others?

They ignore it, as they do our human, civil, and inalienable
rights.

But do we ever receive credit where credit is due?
And do we ever receive recognition when appropriate?
The truth, the power and the motivation of words,
the intelligence, is what attracts me, and why I love it.
For these same reasons, they fear it, therefore condemn it.

Nappy head

K. Kerbanalli

Nappy head!
Raisin head!
Doo-doo head!
Buck shot head!
Brillo head!

"Tu tienes pelo malo," my father
said.
"You have good hair, not coarse,"
said my Cuban friend.
"You better put some texturizer,"

said mi abuela.
"You are so lucky to have such
pretty curls," said a lady in the
subway.

"I don't know what side of the
family you got that hair from,"
said my mother.
"Must be your mother side,"
said my father with his curly
clumped head.

"I like a girl with long, straight
hair," said my crush.
"I like a girl with natural kinky
hair," said my dreaded admirer.

Sometimes We

Sometimes we held hands on trains beneath the New
York streets cautiously stealing glances at
each other, exhausted from the pulse of Congo-Angolan
Yuka laced in salsa

Sometimes we walk Bloque De Oro taking in the sounds
of Tiano A-Fri-Ca-no Abuelas explaining why Hairo
could not have another water ice. Grit, Grime of Eco-
nomic Oppression of
North Phi-La-Delphia has turned the wrinkles on her
caramel skin into valleys.

Sometimes we pour libations at Murals Immortalizing
fallen Chicanos attempting to reclaim Cali-For-Nia
one barrio at a time with the force, strength, and
Fearless power of Aztec deities.

Sometimes we confuse each other with our spanglish
and ebonics developed out of oppression in Cibao
sugar plantations and Cotton fields of Tennessee
speaking about love, nature, and community through
Marimbas and Tambourines, using the colorful fruits
of republica Do-mini-ca-na and the warmth of
southern pan fried corn bread to comfort us during New
England Winters.

Sometimes we forget we're Black and Latino

Sometimes we fall asleep on each other with
syncopated Mambo House heart beats. Riding the
four am Ele through Cabrini Green to the South Side
of Chicago seeing the souls of ghost who left the
south because they were not gonna share crop No Mo

Sometimes we eat Kenaypas and Tamaridos from
Bodagas
next to Jimmy's Fried Catfish store in
Adams Morgan that didn't take food stamps, being
couched by a woman who has great great grand babies
on how to pick greens for Vegetarian stew.
Listening how she picked cotton before the moisture
even left the dew.

Sometimes we silently admire Fedal, for standing up
to imperialism, bringing the wrath of Ogun on exiles
in Miami that work Haitian refugees on there sugar
plantations until there weak and frail. Wondering
if he brought his shrine to obatala when he slept at the
Theresa Hotel.

Sometimes we remember that Hip-Hop culture is the
physical manifestation of the political frustration
of African and Boricua youth. Even though we rarely
hear lyrics that speak to this truth.

Sometimes we forget we be Black and Latino

Sometimes we be forgetting.

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My shiny, pin-straight haired
Chinese professor said,
"I don't why people straighten their
hair, it's so unnecessary."
A black male friend of mine said, "
"Why don't you straighten you hair,
you would look so much better."
My friend's dreaded boyfriend said,
"Kami I love your bushy, curly hair."
(Of course my friend has light
brown pin straight hair.)

Go figure.

Black Fiction

Testimony of Mercedes Curbanalli

By Kami-Leigh Agard
Onyx Staff

"I received a letter in the mail. It was delivered to my office in New York. For over two months, I never attempted to sort through my mail because between all the meetings and this big ad pitch with Pepsi, who had time to sort through something as trivial as mail? The office assistant, Shirley, (who happened to be my best friend) joked that I probably was being reported to creditors because it was so long since I opened any of my mail. So she valiantly volunteered to the task. However, she walked in my office with this small white envelope in her hand with a startled expression on her face. I looked at her curiously, yet impatiently because I was wondering what was this silent drama all about. She handed me the envelope. I noted that her ordinarily strong coffee brown complexion appeared pale, as her hands quivered ever so gently when she handed me the envelope. She mouthed, 'I'm so sorry,' and quickly, like a frightened mouse, retreated quickly, firmly pulling the door behind her.

I looked down at the envelope placed in my hand. The whiteness of

it gleamed ghost-like, especially in the dimmed light of my office. This harmless looking envelope combined with Shirley's odd behavior made me shiver, despite the warm heat blowing from the centralized heating system. I remembered looking at the digital thermostat. It blinked 75 degrees. The return address on the envelope read

"Desmond Archie
15 Massachusetts Road,
Atlanta, GA 10566"

Hmmm, Desmond. I could smell his cologne, even now. Envision his well sculpted caramel-coated body. His thick, long locks that I loved tangling my fingers in. Those thick, juicy lips that just provoked sensations up and down my pelvis, urging me to... Oops, wait. Let me stop this fantasizing. Back to the office. Yeah, so I held the envelope in my hand, recalling that week in Jamaica about six months ago. Three of my friends and I went to Negril, Jamaica for our last spring break of senior year. We were about to graduate in 90 days and we thought that we'd better go somewhere together before we graduated and moved on with our lives. Desmond was there coincidentally with three of his friends from Morehouse College. They were actually juniors. Naturally we all hooked up

and spent a blissful seven days. I was still a virgin at 22. However, one look at Desmond and I fell in love, and I guess... Just? Well, the last night, I spent in Jamaica, well you know what happened... Heh, I thought we were soul mates. After we left Jamaica, Desmond and I continued correspondence through the phone and e-mail. However, then I graduated and got this sensational job at one of the most prestigious advertising agencies in New York City. I got so involved with work, that I did not have the time to keep correspondence with Desmond. The last time I spoke with him, I promised that I would come visit him in Atlanta for Christmas. You know, next month. Well anyway, back to the letter. I opened the envelope and took out a letter. It seemed really short, so I quickly scanned through it. My head felt like it was exploding in a thousand pieces. My heart beat so fast that I thought it was going to burst. It read:

"Dear Mercedes, It's been a long time since we've spoken. I know you have been busy with work. I tried to call you a lot of times, but you were never home. You never even answered my e-mails. Well, this seems to be the only way that I can get this information to you. Well, I just found out that I'm

HIV+. It's been about a month and a half since I found out. I'm telling you this because I'm really sorry. Back in Jamaica, when we made love that first night, I didn't use a condom. It just seemed so right at the time. Well, if you remember I did withdraw. So I'm hoping that maybe well, you'll be ok..."

Doctor Fern, I could not read anymore. I was stunned. Shirley knew! I got up and tried to throw the letter far away, but it only floated in the air and almost tauntingly landed on my desk face up. I..."

In my profession you hear stories like this one all the time. For some reason, this one struck a deep chord within the depths of my heart. The young woman in front of me had really blossomed into a beautiful young woman. I was her Biology professor in her freshman year when she was a gangly teenager.

Not knowing where to turn, she flew to Boston, the next day and came to my office immediately. She broke the news. She felt that I would be able to give her good counsel. I told her that there was a very good chance that she acquired the disease as a result of a single act of unprotected intercourse.

Running Unlimited

lyeoka Ivié Okoawo

All that I see from this resilient distance
Are embedded in emotions running unlimited
Into sunsets
Through streams of tons of
I wants to love you
But you won't
Must stop me
Turn from me
Can't let me in.....
So I fall
And dream of the other women that I can't be
Because they're not me.
Never could be

Anything but this
Yet I miss stealing you on Sun days
Into the worlds we used to make together
Made of love
Running unlimited into sunsets
Through streams of tons of
I wants to love you

My belly sings songs of empty lullaby illusions
Finding me time to help you justify
Your attempts to solidify the maybes
And should bez
Or could be a possibility...
But I just wants to love you...
And/Or touch you
Like the wind kisses the wing of a butterfly
That braves through rose petals and thorn bushes

While my consciousness lingers on concepts of
Making this sunrise last forever
Or however long eternity can be maintained
Without being missed
By the lovers that dreamt up ways to contain it
I love the simplicity of just wanting to love you
In rhythm
To the sound of a saxophone
Or to the voice of James Ingram
Running unlimited distance to hold you
I just wants to love you
But you won't
Must stop me
Turn from me
Can't let me in...
So I fall
And I dream
Again.

Thief In The Night

Eric Esteves

Color Me Bad because I am not a bad
Color me Black like my complexion
because I am the reflection of those
who fought before my time
And their spirits are embedded in this
reflective rhyme sequel
I ador, mi amor, no more than the
love I have for my people
Take a gander through these peep-
holes, though
And you will observe poor souls
worshipping bulletholes
and whatever the fuck else Jay-Z
adores as his clothes

I chose to write scores of militant
prose,
of course they're much stronger than
any old whore's pores
But, do you really want me to get you
that open?
I shout one word, Activism
Someone started choking
The mf's in the corner who just came
to drink
and get blunted should know this,
I ain't fucking joking

And even some nonchalant Nubians
up front wanna talk shit
and proceed smoking
My asthmatic lungs can't take it
But I rock on
Taking a dramatic plunge in a pool of
blood, sweat, tears, and regrets
With a banjo on my knee,
a bandage on my wrists,
and a black bandana wrapped 'round
my dome
like brother Shakur, i will not be a
gnome
nor a pawn to be played or lured
Do not be insecure, for you will hear
my voice
Taster's choice no longer fulfills
your needs
because i am the nicotine high
without the cream
unless your dreams are cloudy
and diluted with inferior notions
that you cannot do it
and that your mind is not superior
or even as much comparable to
normal folk
An abominable denunciation, indeed
This dominating doctination is
simply stating that we must
look to the denominations who were
persecuted and gave birth

to the creation of this thought.
Why is it that so many of us previ-
ously fought?
They been there and done that
so is this a flashback?
For what is now so ignored, unno-
ticed, uncherished - formerly
nonperishable
Do you see what I'm getting at?
It's well-near unbearable to witness
this state of affairs.
I came here to this planet a thief in
the night
He who only whispers lullabies in
the ears of those cuckoo
Utmost respect bestowed upon the
Zulu Nation
And I ain't Haitian, Bajan, Jamaican,
or Trini
But if you don't know what this
soul-fired-cajun-spiced Negro
spirituality is that I got in me
You better recognize!
Gaze at the light in the rear of your
eye
Because I have to stand up and
affirm my right
because I am that thief in the night
Am I here in greed to feed my need,

my addiction
Or is my life purely nonfiction and I
have to scrounge to provide
for my seed
a harrowing decision to be made
and now that I'm narrowing the limits
to which my name is played out
I now claim clout for those unable to
even claim residence
resistance is my fourth middle name
So I also claim no names
not now, not here, no way, and no how
But if I do arouse a sensation in your
vein
similar to what cocaine does to your
brain
before you fricassee it - sunny-side
up
why don't you stand up
and claim no fame with me
as we chill on picturesque stoops on
the sunny-side of the street
and I may sleep at ease knowing that
I am no longer the only thief in the
night
creeping upright
with gorillas on my back
and dilated pupils
full-focused on the awaiting eve
for I will breathe once again...

Hip-Hop Track By Track



Album Review

By Maurice Archer
Onyx Staff

The Track by Track is back to end off the semester. We gonna end this spring semester off right with some real hip-hop, 'cause that's all I can bring y'all. This month's pick for review was "Soundbombing II" from Rawkus Records. This compilation is da underground's finest emcees. I gave it a full \$14.99 rating, so check it out. Also, watch for Mobb Deep's "Murda Muzik" coming in June. I heard some of it already and all I can say is Queens is gonna stay repin'. Just remember that.

Track 1-The Intro is Babu and J-rocc of the world famous(DJ combination) Beat Junkies cuttin' up a ill beat to start the album off. The real cats will remember this beat from Redman's "How to Roll a Blunt". Crazy cats are calling Babu and J-rocc(the beat junkies) to shout out underground hip-hop, Rawkus Records, and this new Soundbombing effort. These cats are holdin down the underground right now.

Track 2-The beat junkies are the DJ's for this whole album, so from now on, I will mention them by their team name. They cut up an intro to the new Eminem

joint called "Any man". The beat junkies are dumb nice.

Track 3-The Beatminerz(Mr. Walt)laced Eminem with a hot a\$\$ beat . He does his thing lyrically too. I was definitely impressed because of I.Mr. Walt facing the beat and 2. Eminem has a new voice hip-hop hasn't heard yet. His last line is "some 'um, some 'um, some 'um, some 'um, I get weeded, my daughter scribbled all over that rhyme I couldn't read it. I like that. I can't front.

Track 4-"B-Boy Document 99" sounds like one of those "let's go back to the 80's" tracks. The beat is hot, Mos Def and Mad Skillz rep on the whole track. Mad Skillz even disses Beanie Siegal on some down low sh*t. We'll see if anyone else notices that. These cats called "High and Mighty" do their thing lyrically too. They even had their DJ Mighty Mi hook the beat up. That bell sound is killin 'em.

Track 5-Another intro to a track called "WWIII" by Pharoah Monche and Shabaam Sahdeeq. The beat junkies are dumb nice, once again.

Track 6-The two ill emcees that I just mentioned kill the beat laid by this cat named Lee Stone. "WWIII" has a hard, battling, at war type of beat. It sounds like "bimp bi-nimp buuuuummm,

dididint". This is definitely a dope track you should give a good listen to.

Track 7-Another down low cat is Ra the Rugged Man. He brings a new style of rhyming to hip-hop. He's from Long Island(Suffolk County to be exact), but he's down with the Wu and the whole Rawkus family, so we forgive for being from LI(no disrespect De La, EPMD, Prodigy of Mobb Deep). Another phat track to add to a so far perfect album.

Track 8-A short intermission with Prince Paul and J-Live. They just big up to Rawkus and the soundbombing project. J-live is another lyrically nice cat to watch out for. Like he says "MC No-doz, don't sleep".

Track 9-Kid Capri joins in as he must do on every underground album. Him and the beat junkies introduce the new joint by Medina Green and Mos Def called...

Track 10-"Crosstown Beef" introduces a Mos Def prodigy named Medina Green.

He's nice too but it seems like he's one of Mos Def's fam or boy from back in the day. Don't get me wrong, the track produced by Pos from De La Soul blesses them with a calm beat to rhyme to. The fact that they sound alike is phat. I just wanted to mention that there's no originality in Medina Green's flow.

However, the difference in their voices and the phone call/talking in the crib concept made the song phat. It sounds like big brother and little brother.

Track 11-Marley Marl and Pete Rock(Future Flavaz for my NY ni\$8az) help the beat junkies introduce "7XL" by Sir Menelik, Grand Puba, and Sadat X. Babu and J-rocc cut the beat up on some next shit.

Track 12-Grand Puba starts off "7XL" with a rhyme that let's everyone know that he's still got it. Sir Menelik is another underground cat to look out for. His DJ, Spirna creates a new futuristic, car thumpin beat, just like the beats Sir Menelik usually be on. Sadat X is one of those, either you like his style or you don't, type of cats. I like his sh# though as he completes the trilogy.

Track 13-"Chaos" is the best track on here. Kweli and DJ HiTek(Reflection Eternal) summoned Bahamadia from under the underground. HiTek not only kills the beat, but he puts it in the ground six feet deep. This is the perfect beat for Kweli and Bahamadia(or anyone) to rhyme over. They both drop science for us to listen to. My favorite track on the album.(HiTek is nice on the beats)

Track 14-The Dilated Peoples get together with Tash from the Alkaholiks for the title track. Babu(beat junkies) is the DJ for the Dilated Peoples and that's probably why this is the title track. Phat rhymes over phat beats and a DJ scratching. What else can you ask for.

Track 15-"Brooklyn Hard Rock" is the next track. Some cat named Thirstin Howl III rhymes and does production for about two minutes. It's a'ight when you get used to his style. The beat is dope though and that's all I need.

Track 16-Another track with Pharoah Monche. I like that they gave him a lot of burn on this album. He's starting a solo career now(just split up with Prince

Po from their group "Organized Konfusion"), so it's good that he's giving his fans tracks to hear before his first solo effort drops. "Mayor" is Pharoah duckin Po-Po because he snuck in and shot NY city's mayor. The story is ill. Another non-disappointment.

Track 17-The beat junkies scratch in another intro. This time it's to a new Company Flow joint.

Track 18-"Patriotism" is the newest joint by Company Flow(El-P,Bigg Jus, and DJ Mr.Len). the beat is slow and catchy. Everything is typical Company Flow sh#. That's why this joint is dope. They are underground to the fullest(NY)

Track 19-Q-tip from "A Tribe Called Quest" joins the beat junkies to introduce the 1999 underground anthem "1-9-9-9". These two DJ's must have been practicing for a very long time. They make cuttin' seem so easy.

Track 20-"1-9-9-9" is, like I said before, the underground song of the year. Common and Sadat X bless HiTek's instrumental. Y'all should've heard this one by now. Just look for the video with Common looking like a Black Panther.

Track 21-Digg in the Crates crew took a loss recently(Big-L Rest in Peace). Diamond D holds it down anyway with a phat, yet repetitive sounding beat. Another phat track to add to the list.

Track 22-Mos Def freestyles over a beat junkies beat. Then the beat junkies cut in another intro for Mos Def's "Next Universe".

Track 23-Universal Magnetic pt.II, "Next Universe" is Mos Def all by himself on a HiTek beat. Mad bells and bass lines are what HiTek mastered to make this ear treat beat. Mos Def is just being himself on this track. Nothing new in his flow but, for me, it's style that counts with the Mighty Mos Def.

Track 24-Another beat junkies scratch into the intro to the Shabaam Sahdeeq and Cocoa B's joint.

Track 25-The bootcamp, Rawkus connection is just lovely to my ears. Brooklyn is definitely representin on track 25. Shabaam Sahdeeq sets it off, but when I heard Tek and Steele(Cocoa Brovaz), I almost fell out my chair. It felt so good to hear Smif+Wessun on a ill beat. Everybody makes this track a 360° completion of perfection.(Tek, Steele, Shabaam Sahdeeq, Nick Wiz-production, and cuts by some cat named Massey who loves Mobb Deep and Big-L. Another one of my favorite joints).

Track 26-DJ HiTek and Talib Kweli get the last track. Titled "On Mission" because that is what Kweli feels when on the mic. The song is a'ight but, I don't like Kweli just by himself. They could have put a better track on the album.

Track 27-Babu and J-rocc take us out with a little shout out to Rawkus and the cats that helped them make this album happen. Here ends the underground soundtrack of 1999. The junkies bring the beat back on some playing around, freestyle business. They are a bunch of clowns.

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